

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 DPW-01 AID-20 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /147 W

----- 104450

R 291200Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3587

INFO CJCS

SECDEF

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 11797

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, CB

SUBJECT: STATUS OF CINSRIPTION PROGRAM

REF: PHNOM PENH 11737

1. SUMMARY. THE DAILY NUWBER OF RECRUITS REACHED A LOW OF 18 ON SUNDAY BUT WAS BACK TO THZF25&/MARK TODAY53TI AN EFFORT TO REDRESS THE SITUATION PHNOM PENH GOVERNOR UN TRAMUCH CONVOKED LOW LEVEL OFFICIALS AND FIRED THE CHIEF OF THE CITY'S LARGEST KHAND. LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT THEY LACK AUTHORITY TO TRACK DOWN DRAFT EVADERS. END SUMMARY.

2. AT CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON OCTOBER 28 THE FANK RECEPTION CENTER REPORTED A TOTAL OF 3,868 RECRUITS, BROKEN DOWN AS 578 CONSCRIPTS AND 3,290 VOLUNTEERS. THE CENTER REPORTED 192 RECRUITS FOR OCTOBER 27 (146 OF WHICH PASSED THROUGH THE KHANDS) AND ONLY 18 ON OCTOBER 28. AT 1700 HOURS TODAY (OCTOBER 29), HOWEVER, THE COUNT AT THE RECEPTION
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CENTER WAS UP TO 250. RECRUITS FROM TAKHMAU INDUSTRIAL

SUBURB, WHERE A CONSCRIPTION PROGRAM HAS JUST BEEN INITIATED, HAVE NOT YET BEGUN TO REACH THE RECEPTION CENTER.

3. THE KHMER LANGUAGE PRESS REPORTS THAT PHNOM PENH GOVERNOR UN TRAMUCH MET ON OCTOBER 27 WITH THE CHIEFS OF 10 HOUSE UNITS, 50 HOUSE UNITS, AND ILOTS TO DISCUSS THEIR ROLE IN THE CONSCRIPTON PROGRAM. CONCERN APPARENTLY CENTERED LARGELY AROUND THE PROBLEM OF DEALING WITH THE LARGE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS, CIVIL SERVANTS AND OTHER DEFERRED CATEGORIES.

4. THE CHIEF OF PHNOM PENH'S LARGEST KHAND, DECHO, WAS RELIEVED OVER THE WEEKEND, AS A RESULT OF FAILURE TO PRODUCE A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF DRAFTEES. PHNOM PENH GOVERNOR UN TRAMUCH HAS ASSUMED PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE AFFAIRS OF THIS KHAND AND IS APPARENTLY SUPPLEMENTING ITS STAFF WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL FROM THE CENTRAL CITY GOVERNMENT. IT IS TOO EARLY YET TO ASSESS THE IMPACT OF THIS CHANGE IN COMMAND BUT IT SHOULD AT LEAST SERVE NOTICE TO OTHER OFFICIALS THAT POOR PERFORMANCE IN THE AREA OF CONSCRIPTION WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

5. EMBASSY OFFICERS VISITED ONE OF THE LARGER OF THE SECOND LEVEL SUBDIVISIONS (SANGKAT) TODAY AND FOUND THE INTELLIGENT YOUNG CHIEF WELL INFORMED ON AND CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF THE CONSCRIPTION PROGRAM IN HIS AREA. ALTHOUGH ONE CANNOT SPEAK OF A TYPICAL SANGKAT IN A CITY GOVERNMENT WHERE MOST SUBDIVISIONS ARE ALLOWED TO FIND THEIR OWN WAY, HIS EXPERIENCES PERHAPS THROW LIGHT ON CONSCRIPTION PROBLEMS. HE HAS SENT TEAMS COMPOSED OF GENDARMERIE, NATIONAL POLICE, AND SANGKAT OFFICIALS TO CONTACT MORE THAN 200 PERSONS WHO HAVE NOT RESPONDED TO SUMMONS BUT HAS BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE ONLY ABOUT 30. MOST OFTEN THE OFFICIALS ARE TOLD THAT THE SUBJECT IS NOT AT HOME AND SINCE THEY LACK AUTHORITY TO SEARCH THE PREMISES HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RETURN EMPTY HANDED. ACCORDING TO THE SANGKAT CHIEF, THERE ARE 5,895 PERSONS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18

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AND 25 IN HIS SUBDISTRICT, OF WHICH 3,162 HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONVOKED FOR THE DRAFT. OF THESE SOME 2,000 RESPONDED. SINCE MANY OF THOSE NOT CONVOKED ARE STUDENTS AND SOLDIERS HE BELIEVES HE HAS ALREADY CONVOKED NEARLY ALL OF THE POTENTIAL CONSCRIPTS IN HIS QUARTER. THE PRINCIPAL TASK IS THUS TO TRACK DOWN DRAFT EVADERS.

6. EMBASSY AND MEDTC OFFICERS VISITED THE PREY SAR

TRAINING CENTER ON OCTOBER 29 WHERE NEARLY 1,300 NEW
SMARTLY TURNED OUT SOLDIERS TOOK THE OATH TO DEFEND
THEIR COUNTRY, OBEY ORDERS AND REFRAIN FROM INTIMIDATING
VILLAGERS. YOUNG SOLDIERS QUERIED BY KHMER LANGUAGE
OFFICER REPORTED THAT THEY HAD PLENTY OF RICE, HAD JUST
BEEN PAID AND HAD NOTHING TO COMPLAIN ABOUT. ACCORDING
TO BG ITH SUONG ALL THESE RECRUITS ARE DESTINED FOR HIS
FIRST DIVISION. HOWEVER, HE DOES NOT HAVE THE FINAL SAY
IN THIS MATTER.
ENDERS

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